Satisfaction comes ultimately from the enriching and seamlessly woven historical backdrop, the Philippine Revolution of 1896, a worthy counterpart to the French Revolution in the original. The idea of conquest in this case thus resonates beyond the sexual and personal, as it should. Talk of the brewing revolt swirls in the background, and there is irony in the Spaniards' outward disdain of the rebelling *indios*, on one hand, and the moral depravity that takes place behind closed capiz windows, on the other. As counterpoint, the shadow of the United States, the new colonizer, looms over the distant horizon, with all the new ideas that it represents.

Elevating the central discourse on power and subjugation to the realm of history while remaining by turns clever and titillating is chief among this studied adaptation's achievements. Unpacking these elements, the play suggests that the moral depravity at the heart of colonialism is also the reason for its inevitable downfall. Señor Vicente's classic claim of innocence—"It is beyond my control!"—is infuriating and amusing. He is referring to his petty scheming, but by the play's end the statement rightly resounds with colonialist guilt.

Glenn Diaz
MA Creative Writing
University of the Philippines
glennpauldiaz@gmail.com

Art

Everything Is Created Twice. Paintings by Martin Honasan, May 14–June 14, 2015. Bulwagang Carlos V. Francisco, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City.

Vrindavan. Paintings by John Marin, May 14–June 14, 2015. Pasilyo Vicente Manansala, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City.

Art originates in introspection. Martin Honasan's *Everything Is Created Twice* and John Marin's *Vrindavan*, supported by Art Verite and TWA Art

Projects and curated by Ruel Caasi, explore deeply internal yet universal concepts such as chance, memory, and representation. They feature more than a dozen paintings with highly figurative subjects and using traditional media.

CHANCE

What strikes the viewer first about *Everything Is Created Twice* is the size of the seven mixed media portraits. Measuring five-feet squared each, the portraits were duly arresting. Each one is constructed out of pieces of cloth of various sizes, all paint-stained and texturized, assembled on a black canvass, upon which Honasan paints a human face. Honasan combines abstract expressionism and representation to create the effect of faces surfacing from the deep. The controlling concept, according to the brochure, is pareidolia, "the natural tendency of the human mind to construct images out of random configurations of elements such as lines, colors, shapes, textures, and patterns."

Save for the curatorial text and brochure, the exhibition gives no other prompt for the viewer to make sense of the series. There is little to connect the subjects' faces with the medium used, and the seven works do not appear to form a narrative. The initial response is bafflement: perhaps more coherence could have been achieved had Honasan matched fabric type (upholstery? clothes?) with an identifiable subject (a family member? a celebrity?) and composed other than deadpan facial expressions.

One begins to appreciate the artist's vision, however, when one looks at the creative process. Honasan, who has a background in watercolor painting and a strong focus on realism, aims to push the boundaries of his craft with this show. He deserves credit for his dedication: he let paint, color, and texture accumulate on the cloths that he used *for a year.* Viewers would not be able to tell how long it took Honasan to stain the cloths; nonetheless, that the process took much time is implied in the finished creations. Honasan's background in psychology helps us to arrive at his conceptual framework. In the hands of a painter like Honasan, pareidolia becomes the search for humanity through art. Out of the soiled and ragged terrain emerges humanity in the shape of faces formed by the folds of fabrics. Surely, the scale of the works adds to the suggestion of the vastness of every individual's internal self, including and especially that of the artist.

Art, after all, is a synthesis of human experience, and Honasan is an agent of such. *Everything Is Created Twice* resembles a Rorschach blot (another psychological tool used to assess an individual's biases). Seemingly chance configurations invite viewers to guess and see their own selves.

MEMORY

John Marin's *Vrindavan* masterfully plays on the general and the personal. Harnessing monochrome, texture, and narrative, it explores roles that mythologies play in contemporary art-making. In Hindu mythology, Vrindavan is the site of the royal gardens.

Rendered in black and white, the eight paintings remind one of old photos and of the somber and lyrical painting styles of Lynyrd Paras and Zhang Xiaogang. They reveal the artist's fondness for texture, whether tactile or visual. One piece, *Path That Leads Me Home,* almost invites the viewer to part the lush foliage it represents to view an imaginary clearing, so detailed and defined are the leaves it depicts. Considering how in most paintings the brush merely *suggests*, the photographic quality of the work is remarkable.

Most striking, however, are words and phrases in Marin's hand scattered throughout each piece. These are almost imperceptible and are placed randomly (or so it seems to this writer) in the composition. They suggest remembered murmurings from the past. Once perceived, they add an auditory dimension to the works—the sounds of the sea, a passing breeze, or the voice of a loved one are evoked.

While *Path That Leads Me Home* provides the strongest allusion to Vrindavan, the subjects of the other paintings—children, his parents, a *bulul*, or carved wooden figures of rice guardians of the Ifugao—form a rich assembly of characters in Marin's personal mythology. The sitter in *Portrait of Narayan* is poised like a goddess amid a backdrop of clouds and stars, the universe in microcosm. A lotus blooms in the foreground. Yet wearing a jacket and a pair of black-rimmed glasses, and sporting conspicuous highlights, the sitter is clearly of this world and of this time. (Could she be an incarnation of Krishna, who haunted Vrindavan?) Similarly, Marin's portraits of his parents radiate the same incongruity—they become vessels onto which the viewer can pour his own experiences of love, family, and relationships.

The lotus appears in almost all of his works, but its function is not always clear. In most cases, it disrupts the composition and draws attention away